



How Amateur Astronomers Can Get Involved in IYA

If you're an astronomy enthusiast at any level, from armchair astronomer to casual observer to advanced amateur, here are some ideas for how you and your astronomy club can participate in the International Year of Astronomy 2009, celebrating 400 years since Galileo began observing the heavens through his telescope.

Ways to get involved and learn more about IYA2009 right away:

- Visit the international IYA2009 website (www.astronomy2009.org) and watch the movie trailer, and the U.S. national IYA2009 website (www.astronomy2009.us).
- Visit the website of the IYA2009-affiliated TV program *400 Years of the Telescope* (www.400years.org), watch the trailer, and sign up for the program's free newsletter. Other free newsletters with IYA2009 and astronomy updates are written by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (www.astrosociety.org/pubs/newsletter.html) and Universe Today (www.universetoday.com/, sign up on the right-side toolbar).
- If you don't already belong to an astronomy club, join one! You can find a club near you on *Sky & Telescope* magazine's website (SkyandTelescope.com/community/organizations).
- If your astronomy club isn't part of the Night Sky Network ("Astronomy Clubs Bringing the Wonders of Astronomy to the Public"), join up at nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov.
- Use IYA2009 logos on your personal and/or club website(s) as an "IYA Supporter"; U.S. logos are available at www.astronomy2009.us/newscenter/logo-graphics, and international logos are available at www.astronomy2009.org/resources/.

Host star parties and sidewalk astronomy sessions:

Hold star parties and/or sidewalk-astronomy for the public in your community, especially on:

- January 10, 2009 - local IYA opening events
- April 4, 2009 - Astronomy Day (www.astroleague.org/al/astroday/astroday.html) and International Sidewalk Astronomy Night (www.sidewalkastronomynight.com), which overlap with the global IYA "100 Hours of Astronomy" (www.100hoursofastronomy.org) celebration.

If possible, plan monthly IYA events with viewing of NASA's featured celestial targets (astronomy2009.nasa.gov/news.htm), together with monthly IYA Discovery guides and activities (www.astrosociety.org/iya/guides.html).

Please visit the U.S. International Year of Astronomy website: www.astronomy2009.us
and the IAU International Year of Astronomy website: www.astronomy2009.org

International Year of Astronomy 2009

How Amateur Astronomers Can Get Involved in IYA, cont.

- You can find IYA2009 logos on shirts, mugs, stickers and other items at these online stores. Proceeds will support IYA2009 educational programs!
www.cafepress.com/astronomy2009 store for the main IYA2009 international logos
www.zazzle.com/aasiya store for U.S. IYA2009 logos

Grassroots projects (little or no cost):

- Participate in star counting events to raise awareness about dark skies and light pollution:
 - GLOBE at Night, March 16-28, 2009 (www.globe.gov/GaN/)
 - Great World Wide Star Count, Oct 20-Nov 3, 2008 and Oct 9-23, 2009 (www.windows.ucar.edu/citizen_science/starcount/)
- Participate in citizen-science programs such as the Epsilon Aurigae observing campaign (astronomy2009.us/citizen_science/epsilon-aurigae); help variable-star researchers figure out what's going on in the most bizarre eclipsing-binary system in the heavens.
- Sign up for the Saturn Observing Campaign (soc.jpl.nasa.gov/index.cfm)
- Contact your local NASA center, college/university, public observatory, planetarium, and/or museum of science/natural history and offer to collaborate on IYA2009 events.
- Give a talk about IYA2009 events and activities. You can download several appropriate *PowerPoint* presentations at www.astronomy2009.org/resources/presentations/. You can augment your presentations with the IYA2009 movie trailers mentioned above.

If you have funding (or the ability to do local fundraising):

- Print out or install a "From Earth to the Universe" (www.fromearthtotheuniverse.org) image exhibition at your local science center, library, or park.
- Purchase IYA2009 Galileoscopes (www.astronomy2009.us/optics/galileoscope) and give kids the opportunity to build a simple telescope similar to Galileo's and to look at some of the same objects as Galileo did: mountains and craters on the Moon, the phases of Venus, the four biggest moons of Jupiter, the stars of the Pleiades cluster, and the rings of Saturn.
- Convert an SUV, van, or pickup truck into a mobile observatory and use it to conduct star parties where there aren't any otherwise suitable venues, such as in inner cities and rural areas with underserved populations. See, for example, Star Chaserz Mobile Observatories at www.astrolifts.com.

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